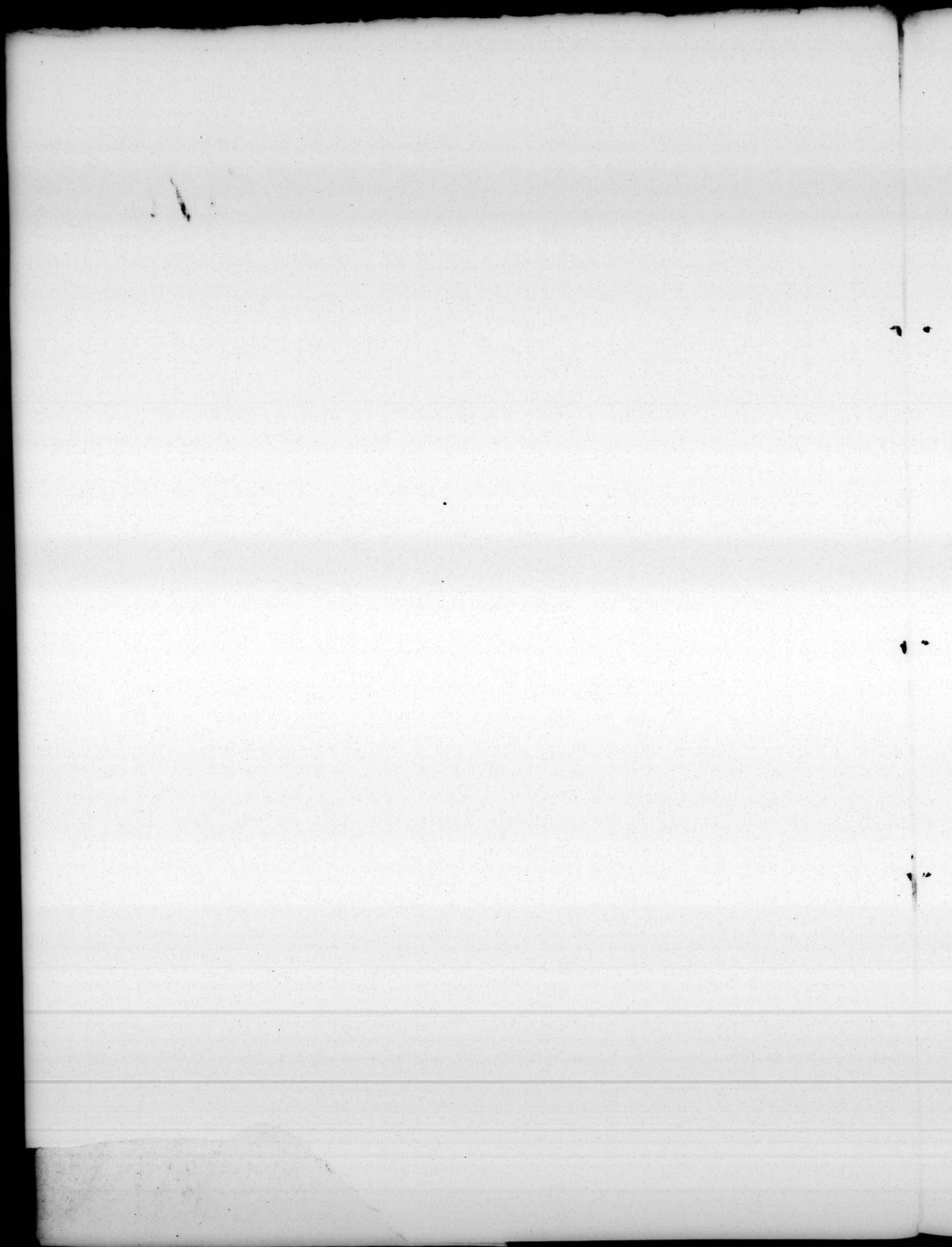


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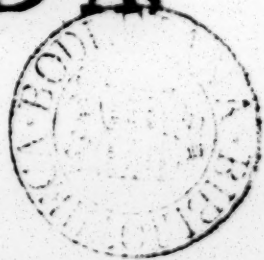
THE
VINDICATION
OF
INNOCENCE

[Price ONE SHILLING and SIXPENCE.]



THE
VINDICATION
OF
INNOCENCE.
AN ELEGIAC POEM.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF HER MAJESTY
CAROLINE MATILDA,
LATE QUEEN OF DENMARK.



Præcipe, lugubres
Cantus Melpomene. HOR.

Dat veniam Corris, vexat Censura Columbas. JUV.

L O N D O N :
PRINTED FOR J. BEW, No. 28, PATER-NOSTER ROW.
M DCC LXXV.



T O T H E
K I N G.

S I R E,

AT a time when your Majesty's faithful subjects have all united in presenting their addresses of Condolence upon this melancholy occasion, I think it my duty to approach the Throne, and offer this tribute of loyalty, this Vindication due to Injured Innocence; and, however inadequate my abilities may prove to the attempt, I trust that the sincerity of my intentions in designing,
will

[]

will atone for any imperfections that may appear in the execution, of a Monument sacred to the Memory of an unhappy Queen: and therefore, to an affectionate BROTHER, I most respectfully inscribe the following Poem; and am happy in this opportunity of publicly declaring my attachment to your Royal Person and Family, and of subscribing myself, with the greatest humility,

S I R E,

Your MAJESTY's

Most Dutiful Subject,

And Devoted Servant,

LONDON,
June 7, 1775. }

THE AUTHOR.

THE
VINDICATION
OF
INNOCENCE.

WHAT means this gloom that fits upon my soul ?

What sigh involuntary heaves my breast ?

Why down my cheeks do floods of sorrow roll ?

And sudden starts intrude upon my rest ?

No more in courts of Laughter I rejoice,

Where Folly rears triumphantly her head ;

Where Dissipation lures with siren voice,

And Pleasures all around their poison spread.

B

Where,

Where Lux'ry crowns, and regulates the board,
 And Circe drains th' intoxicating glaſs ;
 Such are the joys that Maſquerades afford,
 Where ſober Wiſdom would for Madneſs paſs !

Riches and Honours, Vanity appear ;
 The charms of Beauty fade upon my fight ;
 Nor confidence in friends can eaſe my care,
 In Solitude alone is my delight.

Far from the noiſe of cities, I retire
 To vent my grief in ſome ſequeſter'd grove ;
 Where the ſweet ſongſters of the feather'd choir,
 Fill all the air, with warbling notes of Love.

When Phœbus bluſhing ſinks to his repoſe,
 And the cool ev'ning ſpreads her mantle grey,
 There does ſad Philomel her wrongs diſcloſe
 Whiſt Silence heightens the melodious lay.

Sure

Sure (my foreboding mind misgives) some blow,
 Some direful blow lurks in the womb of Fate,
 To lay the glories of my Country low,
 Or spread the veil of Sadness o'er the state.

Perhaps expiring Freedom now may droop,
 By Lux'ry sapp'd, by Brib'ry undermin'd ;
 Perhaps, ev'n now, America may stoop,
 To fetters forg'd by traitors to mankind.

No more the Olive may to peace invite,
 Conciliating measures plead no more ;
 ENGLAND against herself may rush to fight,
 And BRITISH blood may stain a BRITISH shore.

Who shall relate the horrors of that War,
 In which with children fathers shall engage ?
 Wherein the conquerors shall receive a scar,
 And in the day of triumph mourn their rage.

Where

Where is my son? the weeping mother cries ;
 By death, alas! he's stretch'd upon the plain :
 Breathless upon the bloody field he lies,
 Sad aggravation ! by a father slain.

Give me my husband ! cries the widow'd wife,
 Her hair dishevell'd, and oppress'd with woe :
 Alas ! he's by his son bereav'd of life,
 Whose undiscerning fury laid him low !

Oh ! fatal Discord ! how can kingdoms stand
 When set at variance with themselves by thee !
 What dreadful judgments must await a land,
 Plung'd into civil war at thy decree !

Oh ! may kind Heav'n avert that curse of Fate,
 Wherein all must be losers, none can win ;
 May COLONIES obey their PARENT STATE,
 And fowers of Sedition fall therein.

But

But, lo!---what heav'nly perfonage appears,
 Whofe prefence beams effulgency of light ?
 'Tis TRUTH ! I know her by the robe fhe wears,
 Her robe of Innocence, of pureft white.

Say, faireft Virgin ! fprung from fource divine !
 Why haft thou vifited this vale of care ?
 Why haft thou left thy throne, where thou doft fhine
 To VIRTUE gracious, but to VICE fevere ?

Haft thou defcended to reform *theſe* times ?
 Times which for reformation loudly ask !
 Oh ! could'ft thou tell the number of our crimes,
 Thou would'ft, amaz'd, decline the arduous task !

Go to the ſea-waſh'd ſhore, and count the ſand,
 Or tell the ſtars that luminate the ſky ;
 Then ſpeak the follies of our guilty land,
 And mark our judgments falling from on high.

Or art thou come to banish all deceit ;
 To tell meek-ey'd Simplicity to reign ;
 To bid impartial Justice take her seat,
 And to restore a golden age again.

Thus I.-----With melancholy voice she said,
 " Far other cause hath brought me from the skies :
 " Hast thou not heard that my MATILDA's dead ?
 " And fell to Jealousy a sacrifice !
 " I thought that evil tidings swifter flew ;
 " Sure Fame herself with grief is stupify'd ;
 " Or else you would have heard reports too true,
 " That of a broken heart MATILDA died.
 " Is Fame in league with Scandal to betray,
 " Or stamp contempt upon her royal name ?
 " Shall calumnies unanswer'd pass away,
 " Or unrefuted flanders blast her fame ?

" Forbid

[I I]

“ Forbid it Goodness ; no, ’tis thine to write
 “ What Truth shall dictate, Justice shall command ;
 “ ’Tis thine, her Injur’d Character to right,
 “ And sound her Virtue through her native land.

 “ Unhappy QUEEN ! to Greatness born in vain ;
 “ Though friends and brothers could not take thy
 “ Though enemies thine honour basely stain, [part,
 “ And shafts of Calumny have pierc’d thine heart ;

 “ Soon shall these Clouds of Darknefs disappear ;
 “ I’ll tear the mask from Malice, and reveal
 “ Those frauds which laid thee on an early bier,
 “ And banish’d thee to weep, and die at Zell.

 “ Let venal laureats write from venal views,
 “ The common mourners o’er a bed of state,
 “ A nobler theme demands thy nobler muse,
 “ Thy verse to INNOCENCE to consecrate.”

She

She spake—and vanish'd in a blaze of day.

O ! cruel Death, thy triumph I deplore ;
How hast thou taken INNOCENCE away,
Our CAROLINE MATILDA is no more !

O ! come Melpomene, thou mournful maid,
That ever art with Sorrow to be found ;
Leave for a while thy solitary shade ;
Thy murm'ring brook with weeping willows
[crown'd ;
Leave for a while thy gloomy cypress grove,
Which never chearful sun could penetrate ;
Where pensive Melancholy loves to rove,
And Contemplation walks with thoughtful gait :

O come ! and let me lose myself in thee ;
Sad and harmonious let my numbers flow ;
Teach me to mourn departed Majesty,
With a majestic emphasis of woe.

O wretched

O wretched Princess! how shall I relate

The various wrongs that robb'd thee of thy rest?
How speak the triumphs of a cruel Fate,
That plung'd its daggers in thy tender breast!

Sure thou wer't doom'd to sorrow from the womb;
Grief after grief in sad succession rose,
And from thy youthful days unto thy tomb,
Thou wer't attended by a train of woes.

Sure thou wer't born an instance to declare,
That bliss is not inherent in a crown;
That oft the diadem is furr'd with care,
And thorns may lurk beneath a bed of down.

Yes; by thy sad example we are taught,
That whilst the subject's blest'd with peace of mind,
(Which nor by wealth nor glory can be bought),
The monarch reigns, most wretched of mankind.

D

Hail!

Hail ! calm Content ! thee oft the peasant greets,
 Returning from the labours of his days ;
 And having feasted on the balmy sweets,
 Happy upon a bed of straw he lays.

Thy presence can diffuse a smile serene
 Upon the face of conscious innocence ;
 But care distinguishes the sov'reign's mein ;
 Cares against which a crown's a vain defence.

When thou wer't born, no gladness crown'd the day,
 Hush'd was the voice of Music, and of Mirth ;
 In the cold grave our Royal FRED'RIC lay,
 And Melancholy triumph'd at thy birth :

BRITANNIA mourn'd the PRINCE of WALES's death ;
 Thou never could'st a tender father boast,
 Alas ! before thou drew'st thine infant breath,
 Thy tender father, best of friends, was lost !

No fire hadst thou, with all-endearing smiles
 Of prattling infant innocence to please ;
 Death had releas'd him from all worldly toils ;
 He never liv'd to take thee on his knees ;

He never liv'd to clasp thee in his arms,
 And, whilst his breast parental passions move,
 To gaze with rapture on thy op'ning charms,
 Dissolv'd in transports of paternal love !

Sad omen ! that might seem to prophecy,
 That, as a ROYAL ORPHAN thou wer't born ;
 So, overwhelm'd with misery thou should'st die,
 A ROYAL EXILE, friendless and forlorn.

Peace to his gentle shade ! Oh ! could he know
 The Wrongs thou'st suffer'd on a foreign shore ;
 Ev'n in elysium would his sorrows flow
 For CAROLINE MATILDA now no more !

How

How wer't thou tended in thine early age !

Nurs'd in a palace, delicately fair ;

All strove who most thy favour should engage,

Who most should prove assiduous in their care.

Is there a dainty Lux'ry could afford,

That was not fetch'd from distant climes for thee ?

That was not cull'd to ornament thy board,

Or please thy taste with sweet variety ?

For thee the purple blush'd with Tyrian dye ;

For thee the loom its richest textures spread ;

And silver swans afforded a supply

From their own breasts, of down to smoothe thy
[bed.

Nature, for thee, her choicest sweets prepar'd,

And with her fragrancy perfum'd the air ;

For thee their crimson buds carnations rear'd,

And roses beautify'd the rich parterre.

The

The sun ne'er scorch'd thee in meridian blaze ;
 Refreshing zephyrs fann'd thee with their wings,
 Refreshing zephyrs screen'd thee from his rays,
 And winter's loft in palaces of kings.

But to what end hath serv'd this tenderness ?
 Alas ! your bitter anguish to increase,
 And, by a contrast with your former bliss,
 Make thee bewail the more the loss of peace.

These delicacies have but render'd thee
 Less able adverse fortune to oppose ;
 And now, instead of past prosperity,
 We see thee sink beneath a load of woes !

Oh sad reverse ! the curse of frowning Fate !
 That adds new poignancy to ev'ry grief ;
 That heightens all the horrors of thy state,
 And leaves thee wretched, hopeless of relief !

Oh ! had thy Parents, at thy birth foreseen
 Thine honour faded, glory clouded o'er ;
 What undissembled Mourning then had been,
 For CAROLINE MATILDA, now no more !

How happily her youthful days were past,
 Under the great AUGUSTA's tender care ;
 When ev'ry day in joy excell'd the last,
 And Innocence and Virtue crown'd the year.

Her op'ning charms with pleasure she survey'd,
 And in the school of Wisdom form'd her mind ;
 And though the bloom of Beauty grac'd the maid,
 No Vice could in her heart reception find.

Her op'ning charms with lilies might compare,
 Or blushing roses, glory of the Spring ;
 As spotless was her mind, her form as fair,
 All beautiful without, all pure within.

Such

Such was the youthful beauty of her face,
 As Venus might herself be proud to own ;
 Such was her mind, improv'd with ev'ry grace,
 Which in Minerva Queen of Wisdom, shone.

Not swifter were those years of pleasure past,
 Than ev'ry beauty ripen'd as they flew ;
 Each day eclips'd the lustre of the last,
 Till perfect in maturity she grew.

Where-e'er she past, a multitude with joy,
 Upon their PRINCESS reverently gaz'd ;
 Their loyal pray'rs ascended to the sky,
 Envy was dumb, and Malice stood amaz'd.

Her brothers' bosoms Emulation fill'd,
 Who most fraternal tendernefs should prove ;
 AUGUSTA view'd, rejoic'd, her youngest child,
 The last dear pledge of Royal FRED'RIC'S love.

Oh

Oh could these charms have been conceal'd from Fame!

Bless'd had she liv'd, and unensnar'd by pow'r ;
And Calumny had never stain'd the name
Of CAROLINE MATILDA, now no more !

But here, alas! must end her scene of bliss,
Here the beginning of her woes we date ;
Monarchs are seldom born for happiness,
And Peace is rarely found amongst the great.

Beauty and Virtue could not long remain
Wrapp'd in a veil of dark obscurity ;
Fame whisper'd to the daughters of the main,
And through the British empire of the sea,

A rumour spread, increasing as it flew,
That at the ENGLISH COURT a PRINCESS liv'd,
Fairer than ever dreams of Fiction knew,
Fairer than could by Envy be believ'd ;

That

That she was virtuous too, as well as fair,
 Descended from a LINE that GRAC'd the Throne.
 A Monarch listen'd with attentive ear,
 And straight with her resolv'd to share his crown :

A Royal embassy he sent, to claim
 MATILDA for the confort of his love ;
 Perhaps his breast might feel a gen'rous flame,
 Perhaps state-reasons might his passion move.

The Council of the realm his suit approv'd ;
 AUGUSTA his proposals heard with joy :
 But who consulted if MATILDA lov'd
 The Monarch whom they chose for their Ally ?

Was it material ? Princes are to wed
 Not for their pleasure, but the Public Good ;
 And are not Princesses as captives led
 To those who're equal to themselves in blood ?

Oh wretched state of Princes ! happier far
 The meanest subjects, who their choice obey ;
 Who for no int'rests of a nation care,
 But go where Love and Nature lead the way.

The Nuptial is with them a blissful state,
 Transported they behold their mutual charms ;
 Or view their num'rous progeny elate,
 And lose their sorrows in each other's arms.

Not such the lot of Princes. They must chuse
 The Commonwealth, and not themselves, to
 For vain Ambition, Happiness they lose ; [please ;
 And to their int'rest sacrifice their ease.

Thus would I whisper in Ambition's ear ;
 Thee, let not Vanity to Mis'ry bring ;
 For know, the Daughter of a British Peer
 Is more than worthy of a Foreign King.

Virtue can more than compensate for birth,
 And views false grandeur with contemptuous frown.
 Alliances with native British worth,
 May reflect lustre on the brightest crown.

Should Princes in a future age be born,
 And marry subjects that adorn mankind ;
 However politicians proudly scorn,
 'Twould prove their true nobility of mind.

But reasons all are vain ! Parents command,
 The Public Good requires a sacrifice ;
 And CAROLINE must leave her native land,
 To strengthen us with Danes for our allies.

Such was the sentence frowning Stars decreed ;
 From Mother and from Brothers she must part :
 To Denmark she must go, in state to bleed,
 But her lov'd England still retain'd her heart.

In vain reluctant pleaded she to stay,
 And breathe her last in Britain's temp'rate soil ;
 The winds propitious summon'd her away,
 And call'd her far from Albion's happy isle.

She must obey ; and, weeping as she went
 With farewell tears bedew'd her native shore ;
 Whilst fervent pray'rs to Heav'n the people sent
 For CAROLINE MATILDA, now no more !

With fav'ring gales their swelling sails they spread,
 And plough'd the foaming surface of the deep ;
 With pity Amphitrite droop'd her head,
 And ev'ry billow wept to see her weep.

Farewell dear native land (MATILDA cry'd),
 Bless'd seat of Freedom, to the Muses dear ;
 Where I was born, and where I would have dy'd,
 Had I been doom'd to fortune less severe !

Soon

Soon shall thy chalky cliffs in clouds be lost,
 Soon disappear for ever from my view ;
 Compell'd by Fate to seek a foreign coast,
 And bid to all my friends a last adieu.

Oh ! could they read the sorrows of my breast,
 Sure they must pity, though they would not spare !
 She spake---a flood of tears suppress'd the rest ;
 Silence could best excess of grief declare.

Now let us follow to the Danish strand,
 See her arriv'd within the wish'd-for port ;
 Acclaiming millions welcome her to land,
 And nobles guide her to their monarch's court.

Oh, with what joy he gaz'd upon her charms !
 Which beautiful through all her sorrows shone ;
 " Vouchsafe (said he), and clasp'd her in his arms,
 Vouchsafe with me to share the Danish crown ;

Not that a crown such beauty can deserve,
 Or with thy Virtue, glory be compar'd ;
 But I myself resign, without reserve,
 Be thou thyself my great, my sole reward."

Thus having spoke, he tenderly embrac'd,
 And rais'd unto his throne a Mourning Bride !
 A throne, with Majesty MATILDA grac'd ;
 Her clemency a sceptre dignify'd.

The people of their monarch's choice approv'd,
 And joyful acclamations loudly spread ;
 But Hymen from the rites his torch remov'd,
 And Juno frown'd upon the nuptial bed.

However, grief to duty must give way,
 She smil'd with youthful chearfulness again ;
 Her care was now her comfort to obey,
 And heighten ev'ry blessing of his reign.

Thus

Thus for a time she liv'd, belov'd by all,
 Rais'd to the highest pinnacle of Pow'r ;
 Riches and Grandeur waited on her call,
 And Fortune ev'ry blessing seem'd to show'r :

The monarch's joy two lovely children crown'd,
 And fill'd the mother's soul with tenderness,
 Professing friends encompass'd her around,
 And boldly promis'd permanence of bliss.

But was she happy ? could she quite forget
 England, and friends whom there she left behind ?
 Could empty pageantry her joy compleat,
 Or wipe the dear remembrance from her mind ?

In Denmark, Pow'r Despotic bore the sway,
 And Tyranny's oppressive rod was known ;
 But Britons Liberty alone obey,
 And Freedom fix'd and guards the English Throne.

She

She had no friend on whom she could rely,
 Whatever might by strangers be profess'd ;
 And oft to England would she waft a sigh,
 A sigh that issu'd from a troubled breast.

Too soon the show of happiness was past ;
 Soon her prosperity was clouded o'er ;
 And all the fleeting joys were overcast
 Of CAROLINE MATILDA, now no more !

Oh ! that the soften'd Muse might draw a veil,
 Over the Woes that crowd upon her sight ;
 Might at this finiling period close her tale,
 And Treasons dark consign to endless night !

It cannot be. The tribute of my pen
 Is justly due to INJUR'D INNOCENCE :
 Shall Virtue of insulting foes complain,
 Without a friend to rise in her defence ?

Without

Without creating potent enemies,

Who can expect to reign both good and great ?
Suspicion watches with ten thousand eyes,
And Envy treads upon the heels of state.

Crowns may have charms Ambition to allure,
To practise deep-laid schemes of Villainy ;
And stretch a point a sceptre to procure,
Which in another's hand, she hates to see.

Perhaps Ambition might a Mother move,
A fav'rite son to raise unto a throne ;
To act what conscience never could approve,
And by base Arts to shake MATILDA's crown!

Yes ! it was so---I saw the furies light
Accurs'd Ambition's torch with flames from hell :
Envy and Jealousy I saw unite,
And upon CAROLINE their Fury fell.

H

Yes,

Yes, it was so--from her infernal den
 Bursting with poison, Calumny arose,
 From whom, the chastest of the Fair to stain,
 A flood of animated venom flows.

Her matted locks with hissing snakes were bound ;
 And hell, with all its rage, inflam'd her breast.
 She darts the shafts of Infamy around,
 And always aims her malice at the best.

Shafts whose deep wounds despise the healing art,
 And mock at all the Æsculapian store,
 Which ne'er could ease the sorrows of the heart
 Of CAROLINE MATILDA ! now no more.

Secure in unsuspecting INNOCENCE,
 And for so black a tempest unprepar'd ;
 Could she against such Treasons make defence ?
 Pity'd by all she fell ! condemn'd unheard.

Condemn'd

Condemn'd unheard ! For deaf was ev'ry ear,
 To ev'ry plea of Majesty distress'd ;
 Her judges prejudic'd ! her doom severe !
 She fell, by falsehoods of her foes oppress'd.

From England far, from friends and Brothers torn ;
 Who, against Monarchy, should plead her cause ?
 Who should a reigning mother dare to scorn ?
 Or stand the thunders of despotic laws ?

In vain the husband pleaded, and the fire,
 In vain the Royal Infants mov'd their pray'r ;
 The Sov'reign's tortur'd soul was set on fire
 By Jealousy, that never learn'd to spare.

To cause a Revolution in the State
 Though wretched, INNOCENT MATILDA fell ;
 Perhaps the Son to illegitimate,
 The ROYAL MOTHER was exil'd to Zell !

Robb'd

Robb'd of her Crown, degraded from her Throne,
 And from her tender children forc'd away ;
 Will not Reflection ask, What Crime was done ?
 That, let Brandt speak, that, let Struenfee say !

Who, when cut off from Hope by doom severe,
 They on Eternal Confines trembling stood,
 Pronounc'd the HONOUR of MATILDA CLEAR,
 And seal'd their TESTIMONY with their BLOOD.

Had she been Guilty, would her enemies,
 Or Danish Clemency her life have spar'd ?
 She surely would have fall'n a sacrifice,
 And met in Death a just, severe reward.

But Heav'n preserv'd her. She was INNOCENT :
 Heav'n all their bloody purposes restrain'd ;
 And those contented with her Banishment,
 Who in her stead in Denmark proudly reign'd.

What

What could the Danish King? let those declare
 Who know the Virtues that adorn'd his breast;
 For me it is enough his faults to spare,
 And let his follies in oblivion rest.

But would not ENGLAND'S SOV'REIGN interfere
 His INJUR'D SISTER to revenge and right?
 Misrepresented might these Facts appear,
 Or Courtiers raise a mist before his sight.

However, such was her unhappy doom,
 Such was the sad catastrophe of pow'r;
 Such were the Wrongs that hurry'd to a tomb
 Our CAROLINE MATILDA, now no more!

Those that beheld her in her exil'd state,
 Her Honour bleeding, and depriv'd of bliss;
 Must mock at the vain grandeur of the great,
 And smile at such unstable happiness.

Where's now the sceptre? where the gorgeous crown?

Or where the purple robe of Majesty?

Where are the slaves that trembled at her frown,

And strove who should the most obsequious be?

Where are they? Vanish'd in a cloudy day!

No more is CAROLINE a reigning Queen!

They love to walk in Fortune's flow'ry way,

But rarely with Adversity are seen.

At Zell, the hoarse complaints of grief were heard,

And Sorrow fadden'd mourns returning light;

To dissipate the gloom no joys appear'd,

But Melancholy darken'd ev'ry night.

Could she long live! furrounded thus with woe!

Cut off from ev'ry hope of happiness!

Could such incessant floods of sorrow flow,

And life exist superior to distress?

Could

Could she the loss of Character survive ?

Or quite forget the children of her love ?

Beneath a load of Guilt imputed live,

And all remembrance of the past remove ?

Ah no ! As lilies drooping in their prime,

She fell a prey to Death's unerring dart ;

A fever call'd her hence before her time,

And bitter pangs of anguish broke her heart !

Cut off in youth, and Beauty's early bloom,

(Though all her charms by grief were overcast)

She sought a refuge in the silent tomb,

And stabb'd by keen reflection breath'd her last.

Come Greatness here ! MATILDA contemplate,

Breathless and pale inanimated clay !

And know, proud Monarchs, such shall be your state,

When the stern Tyrant summons you away !

Come

Come Pity! drop a sympathizing tear

Upon the wretched Queen, in youth laid low :

Come Flora ! and with roses strew her bier,

And on her grave let mournful cypresses grow.

Come Truth! chief mourner o'er her royal hearth,

And vindicate her greatly injur'd name !

Come Poetry ! and in thy choicest verse

Crown her with garlands of immortal fame!

Though humbled in the grave MATILDA lies,

Releas'd from all her agonizing woes ;

Her spotless spirit soars above the skies,

Superior to the malice of her foes !

Superior to the pow'r of Calumny,

Which never shall disturb her peace again ;

She reigns a GLORIOUS SERAPH in the sky,

For ever freed from ev'ry sense of pain.

Yes !

Yes! though whilst living, Envy hiss'd aloud,
 And Calumny was bold to break her rest;
 I see her VIRTUE bursting through a cloud,
 And her MAJESTIC INNOCENCE confest!

I see her landed in the Port of Bliss;
 Her Conflicts and her Troubles all are o'er;
 Crown'd with ETERNITY of HAPPINESS,
 And CAROLINE MATILDA weeps no more!

THE END.

